

Members

Sen. Kent Adams, Chairperson
Sen. Marvin Riegsecker
Sen. Allie Craycraft
Sen. Connie Sipes
Rep. Vanessa Summers
Rep. Dennie Oxley
Rep. Robert Alderman
Rep. Cleo Duncan
Hugh Beebe
Michael Carmin
Nan Daley
Susan Hansen
Herbert Grulke
John Taylor



INDIANA COMMISSION ON AUTISM

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: September 26, 2003
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St.,
Room 431
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Sen. Kent Adams, Chairperson; Sen. Allie Craycraft; Rep. Dennie Oxley; Rep. Robert Alderman; Rep. Cleo Duncan; Michael Carmin; Nan Daley; Susan Hansen; Herbert Grulke; John Taylor.

Members Absent: Sen. Marvin Riegsecker; Sen. Connie Sipes; Rep. Vanessa Summers; Hugh Beebe.

Sen. Kent Adams called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M. He asked the Commission members to introduce themselves. Sen. Adams then noted that Pamela Meissner, the President of Autism Community Together (ACT), was unable to attend the meeting due to a

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

prior engagement; however, Ms. Meissner had provided a handout² for the Commission members.

Indiana Resource Center for Autism

Cathy Pratt, Director of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism, provided the Center's most recent annual report³ and a needs assessment survey summary data handout.⁴ Ms. Pratt highlighted certain areas of the report and the needs assessment survey handout for the Commission. She discussed the growing autistic population and the new approaches school districts are taking to better serve the needs of autistic children. Furthermore, Ms. Pratt provided information on letters received from parents through the IRCA Needs Assessment Survey. She also indicated the Center had hosted a recent national conference in Indianapolis.

In response to Commission members' questions, Ms. Pratt discussed: (a) the challenges in properly serving the growing number of children diagnosed with autism; (b) continuing to serve the needs of children as the spectrum of needs grows; (c) the problem of trying to fit newly diagnosed children into the same programs; (d) problems in adhering to the recent "No Child Left Behind" legislation; (e) funding issues; (f) working with higher education to better train teachers; (g) trends and studies of parents who home school their children; (h) waiver issues; and (i) communication issues.

Sen. Adams stated that the problems with waivers and communication were unacceptable to the Commission.

Support Services Waiver

Kristen Schunk, Assistant Director of the Division of Disability, Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DDARS), Family and Social Services Agency (FSSA), reported on the support services waiver.

Ms. Schunk discussed the current status of the support service waiver and the steps DDARS is taking to control costs in order to serve more people. Ms. Schunk also discussed the problems that arose in the first year of implementation of the support services waiver. She expressed to the Commission the optimism that implementation in year two would go much smoother and provide more space on the waiting lists for waivers. At Sen. Adam's request, Ms. Schunk submitted a written copy of her testimony.⁵

Rep. Robert Alderman asked that Ms. Schunk report to the Commission at the next meeting on the total amount of federal matching funds available compared to the amount of matching funds Indiana is currently using. He also asked Ms. Schunk to provide information on the

² Exhibit 1

³ Exhibit 2

⁴ Exhibit 3

⁵ Exhibit 4

amount of state funds Indiana would need to pay in order to receive the maximum amount of available federal funds. The Commission members requested that these figures be given in both percentages and dollar figures.

Autism Waiver

Carmela Barrett, Director of the Bureau of Developmental Disability Service, DDARS, FSSA, reported on the autism waiver.

Ms. Barrett gave an update on the persons now being served under the autism waiver and the number of people on the waiting list. Ms. Barrett noted that most of the individuals on the autism waiver waiting list are also on the support service waiver waiting list. At Senator Adam's request, Ms. Barrett submitted her testimony in writing to the Commission.⁶

In response to questions from the Commission members, Ms. Barrett discussed the possibility that an individual may meet the state requirements for waiver services and still not meet the federal standards. Ms. Barrett responded that services are given to those people who meet the state requirements, but there are no matching federal funds provided.

Medicaid Review Process for Autistic Individuals

Louise Taylor, Medicaid Eligibility Consultant, FSSA, testified on the Medicaid review process.

Ms. Taylor reviewed the application and eligibility determination process for Medicaid services of autistic individuals. She described the steps involved in the application process, including information on the redetermination of eligibility. She also discussed the Central Enrollment Unit's role in the process. Ms. Taylor provided her testimony in writing to the Commission.⁷

The Commission members discussed with Ms. Taylor the lack of understanding, even in the medical community, of the application and eligibility determination process for the autism waiver. The Commission members stated their concerns in requiring a review of autistic individuals' medical status during the redetermination process. Committee members discussed drafting a letter to the director of the Central Enrollment Unit, Mary Ann Hack, concerning this matter.

Soft Drink Tax

Megan Murphy from Brebeuf High School testified on the soft drink tax. Ms. Murphy outlined the soft drink tax proposal by reading a written statement, which she provided as a handout to the Commission members.⁸

⁶ Exhibit 5

⁷ Exhibit 6

⁸ Exhibit 7

Sen. Adams recognized John Dickerson, with the ARC of Indiana, to testify. Mr. Dickerson gave further background on the non-nutritional beverage tax. He presented the approach Arkansas had taken with this tax and stated that eleven other states currently imposed a similar tax.

Other Business

Stephanie Richards, a concerned parent, testified concerning her son's problems in receiving proper educational services and treatment by teachers at North Decatur Elementary.

Sen. Adams asked Ms. Richards to submit her testimony in writing.⁹ The Commission members asked that a speaker from the Department of Education and the Commission for Higher Education possibly address this issue at the next meeting.

Mary Urban, consultant in Johnson County, discussed her efforts in preparing teachers for handling autistic students, as well as supervising schools in their treatment of autistic students.

Cliffton Shephard, a concerned parent from Fairmount, urged the Commission to keep looking for alternatives that would decrease the number of children on the waiver waiting lists. He also asked that different educational approaches be explored with respect to autistic children.

Sen. Adams set the next meeting date for Friday, October 24, 2003 at 10:00 A.M.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned 12:08 P.M.

⁹ Exhibit 8